3: Muhammad G-3 (ca. 1900) 1907 AV3 Dard AV3

VII.

Omens.

Probably on account of the frequent attacks on Gilgit made by the chiefs of the surrounding States, certain signs and occurrences are considered to be omens among the Gilgitis. They are as follows :—

(1) If an unusually heavy rain falls at any season in Gilgit, it is supposed that the chief of Yasin will advance towards Gilgit.

(2) If innumerable kites are seen hovering over Gilgit, it is generally accepted that Gilgit is to be invaded by the Nagar people.

(3) If packs of wolves make frequent night visits into Gilgit, and inflict heavy losses among the flocks, it is affirmed that the chief of Hunza is certainly going to invade and plunder Gilgit.

(4) If the harvest be unusually abundant, it is believed that Gilgit will be attacked by the Punyal Chiefs.

VIII.

Lunar Eclipse.

The Gilgitis say that Grahu is the name of a giant, who is a lover of the moon. On the 14th of the lunar months, when the moon is in its full beauty, the Grahu, whenever he pleases, catches hold of the moon, leaving untouched only a part which contains a fig tree. At such time the people of these parts beat their iron pans (on which they cook bread) like drums and cry loudly, "O Grahu, we have brought a large force, beating drums against thee, leave her (the moon), or we will rush upon thee!" In the meantime the eclipse ends, and they become happy at their success.

Solar Eclipse.

The Gilgit people say that whenever any good king dies or is banished from his country, the giant Grahu becomes angry against the sun, and darkens a whole or a part of his (the sun's) face as a sign of grief for the death or the banishment of such a good king.

IX.

The Creation of the World.

It is said that the earth was at first enveloped in water, which was at some places frozen, and where some Yachs (giants) had taken their abode under Yambo Hal Singh, their ruler. On a certain day they held a council for the purpose of bringing earth over the water. Their ruler said that the task was above their power but, however, he knew of a wolf called Bojare Shal who lived at a place named Milgamoh (old ice) and who, owing to his great genius, would be able to perform this work. "Provisions!" was first sent as a messenger by the Yachs, but the wolf refused to come, saying that he would not

[1] [In answer to a question regarding this name, the author of the paper informs us that the original word is *rupi*, which may also mean "fortune."—Ed.]

773 keep trust in Provision, who was a servant of everybody. On this the Yatha sent "Trust" to the wolf, and he came with him to the ruler of the Yatha. The object was explained to him and he said that a bird called Gorai Patan, who lived on the snows on the Conus Mountain, should be sent for at once. Provision was first made the messenger; but the bird declined to come; whereupon Trust was sent to him and he came to see Bojare Shal and Yamlo Hal Singh. Bojare Shal now sent for a mouse which lived close to his home. When everything was ready the wolf gave orders that Yamlo Hal Singh should stand in water as a pillar upon which Gorai Pattan should spread his wings, while the mouse by the making a hole into the ice should bring out and spread all the soil over the wings of Gorai Pattan. The orders were obeyed and the wings of the bird covered all the water, while the mouse brought out all the soil which was beneath the water. In this way the earth was turned over the water.

X.*

"Neelo But" (The Blue Stone).

643 778 There used to be at Gilgit a blue stone called "Neelo But," about a yard square, where the present telegraph office is situated. No king was acknowledged in the country unless he had resorted to it and prostrated himself before the stone. There and then the people adorned his head with a crown, swore fealty and tendered their allegiance. This was the day when all the better class would gather to see the new "Rá" perform all the ceremonies, and undergo all obligations considered necessary to the office of leader of the nation. This was done in order to secure their confidence by a man who was to become sole director over their destinies, among them being many who had taken an active part in bringing him to the throne and proclaiming him their chief.

When the ceremonies were over, all came one by one to kiss his hands, to receive his blessings and to bless him in return. They would then dance to the beating of drums, make merry, sing praises and recite poems describing the heroic deeds already performed by the Rá, his ancestors and others whose lives had become endeared to all by self-sacrifice in the cause of their country.

[787] The *deoya*/ (soothsayer) was not left out on this occasion, for it was necessary to foretell the future of the king and his courtiers, and to exhibit the state of ecstacy that accompanies prophecy by the soothsayer. Before being dismissed at night all present partook of a feast; some were gratified with handsome *khilats* and other distinctions; some gratified by a gesture of kindliness.

The Ceremony of Shri Bai.

778 796 842 782 Shri Bai is the name of a goddess who, as the people say, lived on a rock at Nangam, a village in the Astore district. The rock too is called Shri Bai, and is always kept covered with branches of juniper, while an attendant called "Buh Bin" resides there to look after it. Barren women used to sacrifice goats to and pray before the sacred stone in the hope of progeny. In the hot weather, when the people had gathered their

* [See also p. 109 ante.—Ed.]